

March 11, 2013

Good afternoon Senator Coleman, Representative Fox, and other Judiciary Committee members. My name is Helen McCown. I am a loving, heartbroken, devoted and supportive mother, speaking on behalf of my son Larry L. McCown, inmate #238820. I am here today, in support of House Bill #6581. An act concerning the recommendations of the Connecticut Sentencing Commission, regarding lengthy sentences for crimes committed by a child or youth. My son Larry McCown had just turned seventeen, two weeks prior to the unfortunate situation taken place on November 20, 1994. A young man and his girlfriend had taken him shopping and was enroute to taking him to his son's mother's house where he had been picked from. When, the driver of the car, took a detour and he and his girlfriend exited the car. My son stayed in the car. When the driver returned, it was another young man instead of the girlfriend of the driver. Thinking he was now about to be taken where he originally was going, another detour was taken, and this is where, the passenger then rolled down the window and began shooting, as the car passed by a group of youth. As a result, one of the bullets that hit the house ricocheted off the house and struck a youth that later died. My son called his late father and I and told us what happened. His late father told him what to do until we got there in New Haven. He had been attending school in Buffalo, New York, and was visiting his young son, whom is now in his third year of college. We came down took my son to the police station without an attorney, his statement was given and we were not present as he did so. He waived his Miranda rights which he had no understanding of. My son as a youth could not make the best decision because he could not understand long term consequences. And as a result a case was built upon that statement. He was the youngest out of three young men, and was given more time than the two other men.

Today, Larry McCown is a matured, remorseful, and rehabilitated young man, age thirty five. If this bill is passed it will give my innocent son and others in his situation a meaningful second chance at life. He has taken every opportunity given him, and received his high school diploma, numerous workshops, business courses, and is currently enrolled in college taking courses in Human Resource Management. It was stated in May, 2012 that neither his P.E.P program nor the alternatives to violence (AVP) Basic workshop has been identified as a recommended program for him per his Offender Accountability Plan. In his July 2012 Inmate Performance Eval. It was stated, he always handle himself in a professional manner, and in the period of 2007 – 2008, the supervisor wrote in short that Larry is a good and reliable worker. Inmate McCown gets along with his peers and superior alike and is an asset to this food service operation. Recommend any good time consideration he may be eligible for.

My late husband lost his life to an assailant(s) in an attempted robbery. He traveled tirelessly to help his son get out of this mess as he called it. And Larry in his own words is empathetic and sympathetic with the victims family and all families of a crime, for his father was murdered. His goals if released is to become a humanitarian, work with youth as a mentor, work in human resources, and also become an entrepreneur. My testimony continues as I know I have only a limited amount of time.

I have another letter from my son, that I could not read today, but will mail to each one of you. Thank you for listening. God Bless you.

Sincerely,

Helen McCown